

DESIGNING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN THE ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASS AT UNIVERSITY

Dewi Kencanawati

University of Nusantara "PGRI" Kediri, East Java, Indonesia

Mobile Phone: +6281335633664

dewiktaw@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper examines various communication strategies applied in the English speaking class. Communicative activities in speaking are very interesting for the students. Speaking seems challenging for either the students or the teacher. To be able to use English in real communication appropriately, it needs much practice and experience in using English in speaking class. Good communication strategy in speaking class is necessary, as communication strategy applied will much influence the student's competence in the target language-English. Closely related to the case there are some speaking strategies that could be applied in speaking, such as; using conversation maintenance cues, and using mime and nonverbal expressions to convey meaning. The teacher must consider the principles for designing speaking techniques, such as; encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts; provide appropriate feedback and correction. Various techniques in teaching speaking are important, such as; group projects and field trips. This paper concludes that communication strategy is important in the English speaking class as it much influences the students' competence in using English as the target language. The teacher should consider the speaking strategies, the principles in designing speaking techniques, also some techniques in teaching speaking to create communicative activities in speaking class.

Keywords: *communication strategies, communicative activities, speaking strategies, speaking techniques*

Introduction

Speaking is one of the four language skills besides listening, reading, and writing. Speaking (2011:51) speaking is primary, but messy and difficult to define, it is fundamental to language learning but open to the vagaries of individual use and context. Teaching speaking is very challenging in foreign language teaching, including English. The main objective of teaching speaking is to make the learners are able to use English in real communication-to communicate in English as the target language. To make the learners are able to communicate in the target language actively and appropriately, the teacher should be so clever to design the learning teaching process that interact the learners to learn to use the target language. Related with this matter, the teacher should make use various strategies in learning teaching process of speaking class.

Discussion

Closely related with teaching speaking, the teacher should be able to make use various strategies in learning teaching process in the classroom. If the learning teaching process is well prepared, the learners will also be interested in following the classroom activities. If it is so, it is not difficult for the teacher to get the learning objectives expected. That is why the learning teaching process will be successful easily when the teacher prepares the teaching equipment well before. Related with this matter, it is important for the teacher to design and use communication strategy well in speaking class.

Talking about communication strategy, Rebecca (2011:253) defines that communication strategies are viewed not just as devices to compensate for communication breakdowns but also as tools for enhancing the message and improving communication effectiveness. In this case, communication strategy functions as one of the factors, which contribute the success of communication. Developing the ability to use particular communication strategy is supposed to be an effort to improve the second language learner's communicative competence and to enable them to compensate for their target language deficiency. Therefore, the learners of English as the second language and English as a foreign language need to learn deeply on communication strategy in order to develop communicative competences.

Related to communicative competence, Brown (2000:227) explains that communicative competence as the aspect of one's competence that enables them to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts. Furthermore, he (2000:246) defines four different components or subcategories, making up the construct of communicative competence. They are grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistics competence, and strategic competence. He also explains that grammatical, discourse competences reflect the use of the linguistic system, while sociolinguistic, and strategic competences define the functional aspect of communication.

In speaking class, the teacher should motivate the students to understand both the use of the linguistics system and the functional aspect of communication. Related with this matter, Thornbury (2005:29) explains strategic competence is achieved by means of what are called communication strategies. Some commonly encountered communication strategies are:

1. circumlocution: such as I get a red in my head to mean shy
2. Word coinage: such as vegetarianism for vegetarian
3. Foreignizing a word: such as turning the Spanish word *una carpeta* (meaning a file for paper) into the English-sounding a carpet
4. Approximation: using an alternative, related word, such as using work table for workbench
5. Using an all-purpose word, such as stuff, thing, make, do
6. Language switch: using gesture, mime, and so on, to convey the intended meaning
7. Appealing for help, e.g. by leaving an utterances incomplete, as in:
 Speaker 1: The taxi driver get angry, he lose his, erm, how you say?
 Speaker 2: temper
 Speaker 1: he lose his temper and he shout me

Of course, the speaker might decide that the message is simply not achievable, by whatever means, and adopt what is called an avoidance strategy, such as abandoning the message altogether or replacing the original message with one that is less ambitious.

Furthermore, Thornbury (2005:30) explains that there is another type of strategy, called discourse strategy, is the wholesale borrowing by the speaker of segments of other speakers utterances, often in the form of unanalyzed units, as in this instance:

Speaker 1: when did you last see your brother?

Speaker 2: Last see your brother six years ago...

A related discourse strategy is the repetition of one's own previous utterance:

Speaker 1: The woman hear a noise...

Speaker 2: What kind of noise?

Speaker 1: The woman hear a noise, loud one...

Such a strategies are similar to the production strategies used by proficient speakers, in that they help "buy" valuable processing time and thus maintain the illusion of fluency.

Thornbury (2005:30) also states that it should be obvious that a repertoire of communication and discourse strategies can prove very useful for learners in that it allows them to achieve a degree of communicative effectiveness beyond their immediate linguistic means. The quotation shows that repertoire of communication and discourse strategies are important in speaking.

In teaching speaking of a foreign language, it is very important for the teacher to pay attention to micro skills of speaking. Brown (2001:272) explains that in teaching speaking, the teacher should apply microskills of speaking, as follows:

- 1) Produce chunks of language of different length
- 2) Orally produce differences among the English phonemes and allophonic variants.
- 3) Produce English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, and intonational contours.
- 4) Produce reduced forms of words and phrases.
- 5) Use an adequate number of lexical English stress units in order to accomplish pragmatic purposes.
- 6) Produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery.
- 7) Monitor oral production and use various strategic devices—pauses, fillers, self-corrections, backtracking—to enhance the clarity of the message.
- 8) Use grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), system (e.g. tenses, agreement, and pluralization), word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
- 9) Produce speech in natural constituents—in appropriate phrases, pause, groups, and sentences.
- 10) Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
- 11) Use cohesive devices in spoken discourse.
- 12) Accomplish appropriately communicative functions according to situations, participants, and goals.
- 13) Use appropriate registers, implicature, pragmatic, conventions, and other sociolinguistics features in face-to-face conversations.
- 14) Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
- 15) Use facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey meanings

- 16) Develop and use a battery of speaking strategies, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, providing a context for interpreting the meaning of words, appealing for help, and accurately assessing how well one interlocutor is understanding it.

However, to be able to use English in real communication appropriately it needs much practice and experience in using English in speaking class. Good communication strategy in speaking class is necessary, as communication strategy applied will influence the students' competence in the target language that is English. The teacher should be very creative in order to make the learners active in joining the speaking class actively. It is supported by Rebecca (2005:130) mentions some factors function as descriptors for spoken interaction (as opposed to one-way oral production). They are turn-taking skills, communication strategies, spontaneity, asking for clarification, information exchange, and politeness strategies.

Related with speaking activities, Rebecca (2005) then states that there are some speaking strategies that could be applied in speaking. They are as follows:

1. Asking for clarification
2. Asking someone to repeat something
3. Using fillers (well, I mean, etc) in order to gain time to process
4. Using conversation maintenance cues (right, yeah, okay, hm, etc)
5. Using paraphrases for structures one can't produce.
6. Using mime and nonverbal expressions to convey meaning

Related with speaking strategies, Ellis (2003:72) states that different strategies result in different types of language use they have a differential effect on language acquisition. Rost and Ross (in Ellis, 2003:73) suggest that the strategies have different effects on the continuation of a discourse. He also provides different kinds of listener response moves during the negotiation of meaning. The following is a typology of clarification request (Rost and Ross 1991, in Ellis 2003):

General response strategy and Specific types

1. Global questioning strategies
 - a. Global reprise, i.e. the listener asks for a repetition, rephrasing, or simplification of the proceeding utterance or simply states he/she has not understood
 - b. Continuation signal, i.e. an overt signal that the listener has understood.
2. Local questioning strategies
 - a. Lexical reprise, i.e. a question referring to a specific word in the proceeding utterance as in "what does X mean?", or repeating a word or phrase with a rising intonation.
 - b. Fragment reprise, i.e. a question referring to a specific part of the proceeding utterance but without identifying a specific lexical item.
 - c. Lexical gap, i.e. a question about a specific word or term used previously that the listener has understood but cannot recall.
 - d. Positional reprise, i.e. a reference to a specific position in the proceeding utterance as in "I don't understand the last part"
3. Inferential strategies
 - a. Hypothesis testing, i.e., the use of specific questions to verify whether an inference about what the speaker has said is correct.
 - b. Forward inference, i.e. a question that elaborates on a previously given piece of information.

Besides that, Rebecca explains that the teacher should consider the principles for designing speaking techniques, for examples:

1. Use techniques that cover the spectrum of learner needs, from language usage to language use.
2. Provide intrinsically motivating techniques.
3. Encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts.
4. Provide appropriate feedback and correction.
5. Integrate speaking and listening.
6. Give students opportunities to initiate oral communication.
7. Encourage the development of speaking strategies.

Closely related with speaking class, Rebecca (2005) mentions some important things that should be considered by the teacher teaching speaking, such as:

1. The motivation of the activity is to achieve some outcome, using language;
2. Achieving the outcome requires the participants to interact, i.e. to listen as well as speak;
3. The outcome is not 100% predictable;

4. There is no restriction on the language used.

However, the teacher should use various techniques in teaching speaking. The teacher can choose appropriate techniques, which might be suitable with the teaching objectives and teaching materials, for examples: questions and answers (dialogues), improvisations, plays, readings, speeches, small-group discussions, games, debates, group projects, and field trips. Those teaching techniques have both advantages and disadvantages. They have their own characteristics, which differentiate each other. There is no perfect technique; every technique has strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the teacher should choose the most suitable technique appropriate with the teaching materials, objectives, and time as well as the students in order to reach the goals.

Conclusion

Teaching speaking is very challenging in English language teaching. Besides it aims to make the learners able to use English as the target language in real communicate, it also challenges the teacher to be active, creative, and innovative. In this globalization era, the teacher needs to be innovative in developing not only the materials but also the way of teaching appropriate with the curriculum. To make the learners able to use the target language is the ultimate goal of teaching speaking at university. To meet this goal, it needs much practice and experience in speaking. The teacher should use various techniques and speaking strategies, consider the principles of designing speaking techniques as well as designing communication strategy well in order to reach the teaching objective maximally.

References

- Brown, H. Doughless. 2000. *Principle of Language Learning and Teaching (Fourth Editon)*. New York: Longman
- Brown, H. Doughless. 2001. *Teaching by Principles (Second Edition)*. New York: Longman University Press.
- Ellis, Rod. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harmer, Jeremy. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching (Fourth Edition)*. London: Pearson Education Limited
- Hughes, Rebecca. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Speaking*. Britain: Pearson Education Limited.
- Jones, Phil. (2008). *Communicating Strategy*. England: Gower Publishing Limited.
- Oxford L, Rebecca. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies*. Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited.
- Thornbury, Scott. 2005. *How to Teach Speaking*. Longman: Longman University Press.

Biodata

Dewi Kencanawati is a lecturer at the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Nusantara "PGRI" Kediri, East Java, Indonesia. She gained her S-1 and S-2 Degree of English Education. She is doing doctorate program concentrate on English in State University of Surabaya (UNESA), East Java, Indonesia right now. She presented her papers in some international conferences such as Melta, CamTESOL, Teflin, Iceta, ARACD, ECKLL, and published her articles in journal named EFEKTOR. She is interested in exploring ways to improve students' speaking competence.